

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application, as presently amended, is respectfully requested.

Claims 10-19 are pending. Claims have been amended. Claim 19 has been added.

In the outstanding Office Action, the examiner (1) objected to the drawings because the blank boxes Figures 1 and 2 should be labeled in accordance with their function; (2) rejected Claims 10, 11, 13, 14 and 16-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,214,267 to Hoshi et al. (Hoshi); (3) rejected Claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hoshi; and (4) objected to Claim 15 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Corrected drawing sheets of Figures 1 and 2 labeling the former blank boxes in Figures 1 and 2 with their function are attached to this response. In addition, (1) the reference character $\delta 1$ in Figure 2 has been changed to S1 as described on page 7, lines 3-8, of the specification; and (2) the transmission link 14 in Figure 1 has been modified to show a connection to the power supply unit 16 as depicted in Figure 2 and described on page 7, lines 3-8, of the specification. Acceptance of the corrected drawing sheets is requested.

Claim 15 has been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Allowance of Claim 15 is requested.

Claim 19 is a new independent claim that recites the subject matter of original Claim 16 without the use of means-plus-function clauses and adds thereto a limitation similar to that recited in objected to Claim 15. Allowance of new Claim 19 is requested.

Independent Claims 10 and 16 have been amended in an effort to overcome the outstanding prior art rejections based on Hoshi. Claim 10 now includes the method steps of utilizing the output signal of a sensor associated with an exhaust-gas purifying mechanism of

an internal combustion engine in both (1) a correction assembly by comparing the output signal of the sensor with a reference value; and (2) a detection module which utilizes the output signal of the sensor to determine a phase of regeneration of the exhaust-gas purifying mechanism. Claim 10 further includes the steps of (1) supplying a signal from the detection module to the correction assembly when the phase of regeneration of the exhaust-gas purifying mechanism is determined; and (2) acting on the sensor to decrease the difference between the output signal and the reference value based on a correction determined by the correction assembly. Claim 16 now recites utilizing the output signal of a sensor associated with an exhaust-gas purifying mechanism of an internal combustion engine in both (1) a correction assembly having measuring means for determining a difference between the output signal of the sensor and a reference value; and (2) a detection module having means for determining a phase of regeneration of the exhaust-gas purifying mechanism. Claim 16 further includes (1) means for supplying a signal from the detection module to the correction assembly when the phase of regeneration of the exhaust-gas purifying mechanism is determined; and (2) means for controlling the supply voltage of the sensor as a function of the difference between the output signal of the sensor and the reference value based on a correction determined by the correction assembly.

Hoshi does not teach or suggest the subject matter of amended independent Claims 10 and 16. Hoshi's invention generally relates to an apparatus for controlling a heater for heating an oxygen sensor used in an internal combustion engine for measuring an air-fuel ratio in an exhaust gas. More particularly, Hoshi's invention is concerned with an apparatus for learning a target heater resistance and controlling the temperature of the oxygen sensor on the basis of the learned target heater resistance. Hoshi does not teach or suggest utilizing the output signal of a sensor associated with an exhaust-gas purifying mechanism of an internal combustion engine in both a correction assembly and a detection module as now set forth in

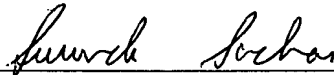
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independent Claims 10 and 16. Accordingly, allowance of independent Claims 10 and 16 and Claims 11-14, 17 and 18 dependent thereon is requested.

The present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. An early and favorable consideration of the present amendment is hereby respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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